

Research on the Design and Construction Overview of the Palace of Soviets :
the Architectural Monument under the Burden of the Megalomania for its own Image
and of the Image of State.

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In this article, subject of our research is the Palace of Soviets, which was one of the largest architectural competitions in the history of the USSR and did not realize in the end. The purpose of this study is designed to reveal process of this architectural project from the beginning to the end by examining archive materials. In the introduction of the article, we investigate how this architectural project had been regarded as one of biggest national projects in the USSR in the 1930s. We introduce how the Palace of Soviet had been represented in painting works and city planning of this era and had been related with Soviet cultural politics at this period. It shows an outline of the architectural project of the Palace of Soviets and characterizes our study.

At first, paying attention to the name of this project, “the Palace of Soviets,” which means category of building type of the palace, we analyze, in the first chapter, the architectural project, which was named after “the Palace,” from the October Revolution in 1917 occurred just before the start of the architectural competition of the Palace of Soviets for the commonality of the architectural project. At this period, there were several architectural competitions named after the “Palace,” but, among them, there were few projects that were considered as symbolic architectures with political meanings attached. The Palace of Soviets meant not only the type of the palace building, but also the architectural project itself, which symbolized socialism system of the USSR. Therefore, we focus on the meaning of the Palace of Soviets as such architectural project. In this chapter, we describe details of these architectural competitions and their concepts which the organizer required for this architectural project.

We investigate the architectural competition of the Palace of Soviets after understanding its process in the second chapter. In previous academic works, there were few studies about the process, in which the architectural competition had been organized, especially before its preparatory tour. We examine its process and a noteworthy feature of each four tours of this architectural competition by analyzing archive materials and submitted plans for building structure of the Palace of Soviets.

The main subject of the third chapter is the process of stage construction of the Palace of Soviets. After the architectural competition, based on the Boris Iofan's architectural works, last draft for construction of the Palace of Soviets suffered changes a number of times. It has been revealed, according to the archive materials, that, upon stage construction of the Palace of Soviets, the Construction Bureau of the Palace of Soviets (USDS: Upravlenye Stroitel'stva Dvortsa Sovetov) asked construction companies in the U. S. for advice and technical cooperation. In connection with this, chief architects and engineers were sent to an official trip to European countries and America to study classical style of European architecture and then-latest building and engineering techniques in American architecture and to use them effectively into the construction of the Palace of Soviets. This experiment reflected on the process of the planning for the construction of the building, i.e. its soil ground, foundation, building framework, architectural materials and so on. The USDS had struggled to deal with problems associated with this process. Meanwhile a property of this architecture strengthened more a sense of monumentality on the ground of the architectural trend toward Historicism in the USSR in the 1930s. Thus, the course of action of the USDS toward the realization of this project is highlighted and technical problems in the third chapter.

In the third chapter, we pick up the ending of this architectural project, looking at a final direction of its stage construction. In previous researches, there were little references about the fact that the USDS and chief architects of the project had negotiated with politicians and concerned government officials about a designation as to conservation of the architecture after the World War 2. In the fourth chapter, we focus on the ending of this architectural project on the basis of archive materials, because, in previous researches, it has been introduced as if the project of Palace of Soviets was canceled in 1941, when it actually was suspended temporary. Although the USDS stopped engaging in the construction of the Palace of Soviets after the suspension, its bureau became involved in other construction works and architectural projects under its name. At the same time, main architects of the architectural project of the Palace were designed several times as the last plan for the construction and brought a discussion on whether to resume the construction work to the Council of Ministers of Soviet Union (Ministry SSSR), a highest organ of decision-making before 1952. As a result of such discussion, the Council assigned the USDS other new construction works without resuming the construction work of the Palace, and management costs for this

architectural project had not been raised even in the 1950's. It means that the architectural project of the Palace of Soviets had lost priority.

In 1958, an architectural competition under the name of the Palace of Soviets was organized again. However, it was completely different from the previous architectural competition of the Palace of Soviets in 1931-1933. The reason is that the competition in 1958 was not conformed to the program enacted in the former competition in 1931-1933. Thus, in official media, there were little information about the new architectural competition of the Palace of Soviets and when the previous architectural project of the Palace of Soviet organized in 1930's was actually closed. In the last chapter, we review these points in accordance with archive materials and try to comprehend the ending of this architectural project.

In conclusion of this study, we characterize the architectural project, the Palace of Soviets, as followings: first, a vanguard of national architectural style, as a compilation of ideological natures with a monumental image, in which the organizer of this project has tried to include all functions of a building; second, an obsession on the nation in the USSR through reconstruction of the general plan of Moscow; and finally, a component which made contribution to maintenance of Stalinism. After his death Nikita Khrushchev made a report "On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences" (so-called, Secret Speech) on which he charged Stalin in term of having fostered the personal cult at that time. With this critic Khrushchev referred to the reconsideration of the project the Palace of Soviets. Therefore, the Palace of Soviets was officially discontinued and this research revealed it as the national architectural project from 1928 to 1956.